

August 8, 2003

Diana Kaminski, Senior Planner  
Development Services Department  
Community Design and Development Division  
City of Tempe  
P.O. Box 5002  
Tempe, AZ  
85280

**Re: Review of City of Tempe Public Review Draft of General Plan 2030**

Dear Ms. Kaminski:

The purpose of this letter is to forward our comments on the City of Tempe public review draft of the general plan update. We enjoyed reviewing your general plan 2030 and hope that you find our review helpful. Our comments on your general plan are brief, as the plan is very well done. Staff involved in reviewing the general plan made very complementary remarks.

We look forward to the City's response to our review. Should you have any questions or would like to discuss our review comments with any of the professionals within MAG, please do not hesitate to contact Michelle or me at (602) 254-6300. We look forward to working with the City in its continued efforts in planning, towards a better future, for both itself and the region.

Sincerely,

Jack Tomasik  
Regional Development Manager  
Maricopa Association of Governments

cc: Dennis Smith, Executive Director, Maricopa Association of Governments  
Michelle Green, Regional Development Planner, Maricopa Association of Governments

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## **Regional Review of City of Tempe Public Review Draft of General Plan 2030**

### **Basis for Review**

In 1998, planning legislation in Arizona experienced significant change through the Growing Smarter Act. Growing Smarter Plus (2000) further amended the legislation. The result of these legislative changes is that most of the governing bodies within Maricopa County are required to update, and in some cases, add new elements to their general plans. As with previous legislation, the Maricopa Association of Governments is provided an opportunity to review and comment on general plans and major amendments to them.

According to Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS), 9-461.06 (B) (2) regarding the adoption and amendment of a general plan, “The governing body shall...2. Consult with, advise, and provide opportunity for official comment by ... associations of governments.” The statutes also state that,

“...At least sixty days before the general plan or a portion, element, or major amendment of a general plan is adopted, the planning agency shall transmit the proposal to the legislative body and submit for review and further comment to...3. The regional planning agency within which the municipality is located.”

MAG was formed as a Council of Governments in 1967 . The Maricopa Region was defined as Maricopa County when the Governor was delineating Regional Planning Districts in 1970. Since that time, MAG’s role and responsibilities in Regional Planning have been evolving.

Various professionals in MAG’s regional development, transportation, information services, and environmental programs participated in this review. Our primary role is to interpret adopted MAG policies/plans, and compare the draft plan’s content with the intent of these policies/plans. Secondly, we offer comments based on the document itself, pertaining to the organization of the document and its readability. All comments are offered with the intent of providing assistance in the general plan preparation process.

## Understanding of the City's Approach

As we understand it, the City of Tempe updated its general plan to bring it into compliance with Growing Smarter/Plus legislation using in-house resources. This plan is a substantial update from the plan that was presented for review in 2002.

The City is in a relatively unique position in the Valley because it is, land locked, substantially built-out and is entering a stage of redevelopment. This means that many of the elements required by Growing Smarter/Plus legislation are addressed differently in the City of Tempe than they might be in other Cities and Towns in the Valley. For example, the City of Tempe has added a redevelopment element. This is very appropriate and indicates that the purpose of the plan is to meet the needs of the community while also meeting statutory requirements.

In terms of timeline, the General Plan 2030 draft goes to Planning and Zoning Commission September through October for recommendation to Council, and then to Council for public hearings and approval of the plan November through December. Finally, the Plan will go before the voters for ratification in May 2004. It is with this understanding that we offer our comments.

## General Plan Comments

MAG's plans and policies are focused on three main topic areas as follows, transportation, land use and the environment. MAG has adopted regional plans and policies in each of these three areas. The following plans and policies form the basis of our review:

<u><b>Transportation Policies</b></u>	<u><b>Land Use Policies</b></u>	<u><b>Environmental Policies</b></u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Long Range Transportation Plan (Currently being updated under the title Regional Transportation Plan)</li><li>▪ Roads of Regional Significance, 1996</li><li>▪ Regional Aviation Systems Plan, 1993 (Currently being updated)</li><li>▪ High-Occupancy Vehicles Facilities Policy Guidelines, 1994</li><li>▪ Intelligent Transportation Systems Plan, 2001</li><li>▪ Regional Pedestrian Plan, 1999</li><li>▪ Long Range Transit Plan, 1999</li><li>▪ Regional Bicycle Plan, 2000</li><li>▪ Regional Off-Street System Plan, 2001</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Interim Regional Land Use Policies, 1995</li><li>▪ Desert Spaces Plan, 1995</li><li>▪ Environmentally Sensitive Development Areas Policies &amp; Design Guidelines, June 2001</li><li>▪ Eastside Joint Land Use Study, 1988</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Regional Air Quality Plan for Carbon Monoxide, 2001</li><li>▪ Regional Air Quality Plan for Particulates (PM-10), 2000</li><li>▪ Regional 208 Water Quality Management Plan, 1993</li><li>▪ Regional Solid Waste Management Plan, 1993</li></ul>

The City of Tempe Public Review Draft of General Plan 2030 is very comprehensive and well done. The comments we offer are intended to provide a regional perspective and offer the benefit of a third party review.

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## Policy Comments

Although the explicit consideration of regional infrastructure is not specifically addressed in the Growing Smarter statutes, MAG Regional Council adopted a set of policies related to land use and infrastructure prior to the adoption of Growing Smarter/Plus legislation. These are the *Interim Regional Land Use Policies*, adopted in 1995. MAG encourages its member agencies to follow these regional planning policies as best they can in preparing planning documents within their community. The policies are listed below with comments regarding how the City of Tempe's General Plan 2030 is or is not consistent with them.

### Interim Land Use Policies

- ***Infill that supports the development of mixed use communities and that assists local jurisdictions to finance education and infrastructure.***

The land use element of the general plan deals specifically with developing mixed-use communities in the general plan where appropriate. This issue is also addressed in the Redevelopment Element.

- ***Development that contributes to regional land use policies that decrease single occupancy vehicle trips and air pollution in the near future and long term.***

It is clear that the general plan is supportive of this policy. MAG provides a jobs/housing balance analysis as a part of our review process that we do. This helps member agencies get a sense of the level of employment there is to serve households in its jurisdiction. The City of Tempe is well above the County average for jobs to housing, at 2.55 jobs per occupied household as opposed to the County average of 1.37 jobs per household for the base year, 2000.<sup>1</sup> As this indicates, there are many more jobs than households within the City of Tempe. This trend is projected to continue well into the future. The table below shows jobs/housing balance figures for the year 2000 compared to projected build out.

Tempe General Plan Analysis Build Out		
July, 29th 2003		
	July 1, 2000	Build Out
Residential DU	67,000	74,000
Residential HH	64,000	74,000
Population in HH	154,000	196,000
Total Employment	162,000	259,000
Job Housing Balance	2.53	3.50
Numbers rounded to nearest 1,000.		

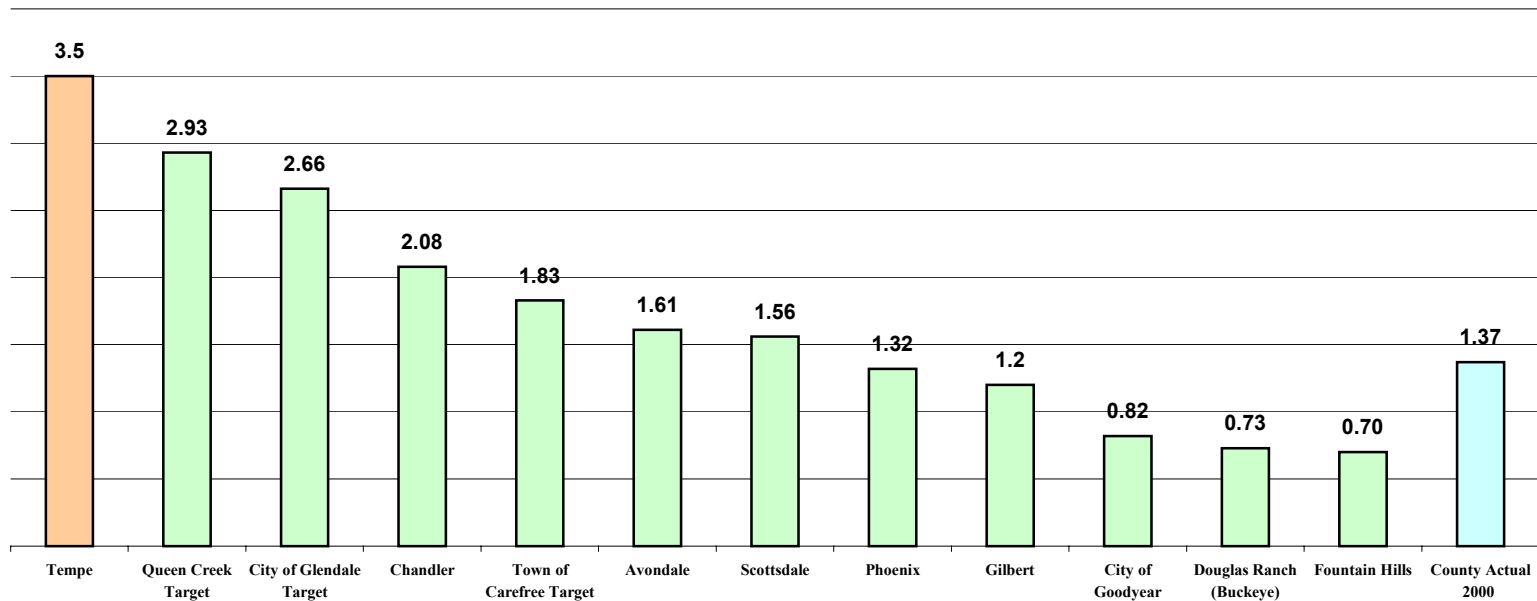
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<sup>1</sup> Source The Maricopa Association of Governments, Interim Projections, June 25, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

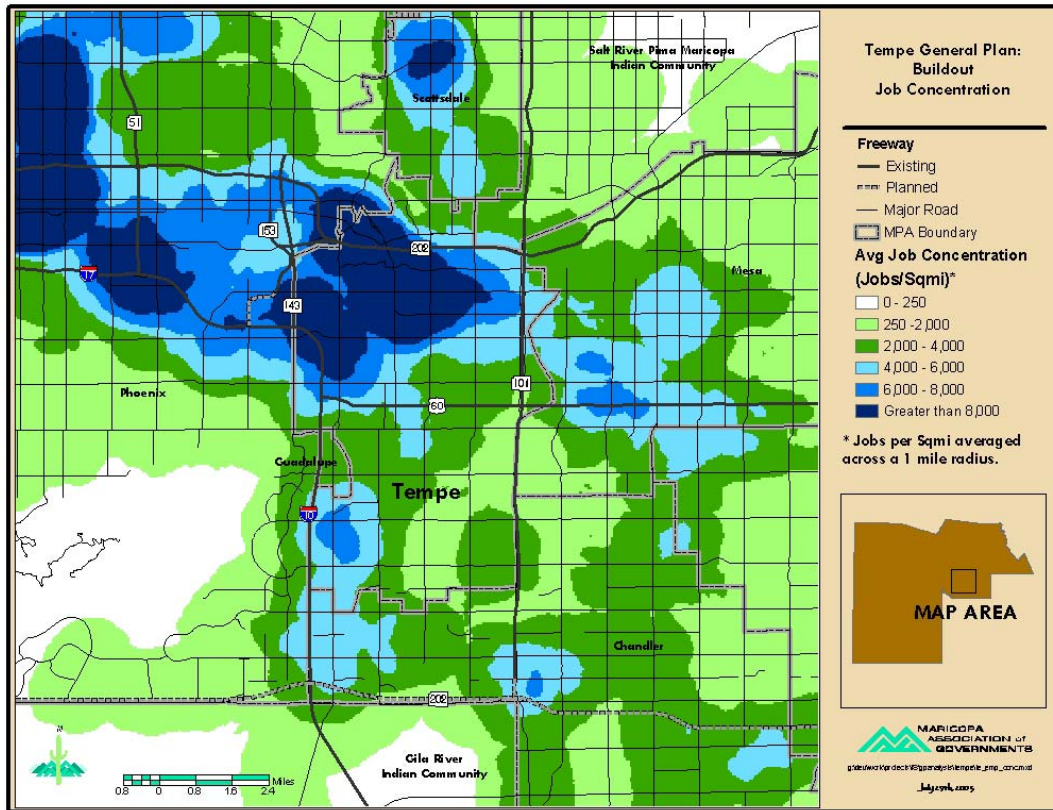
**Jobs/Housing Balance in MAG-Reviewed  
General Plans & Major Amendments  
August 25, 2003**

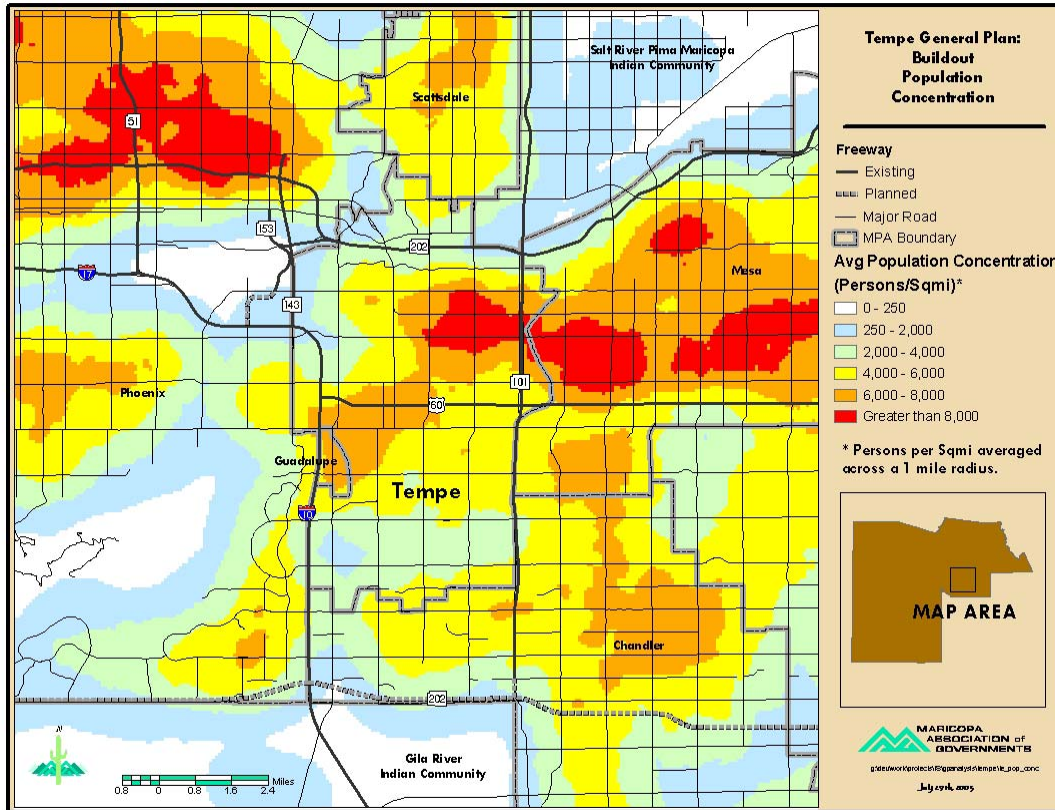


This figure compares the planned jobs housing balance figures for selected general plans and amendments that we have reviewed to date. This gives the City of Tempe an indication of how it fits in with what other cities in the region are planning. This graphic makes it obvious that the City will be well above the County Average for 2000 and as MAG interim projections, dated June 25, 2003, indicate the County average in 2030 is projected to be 1.

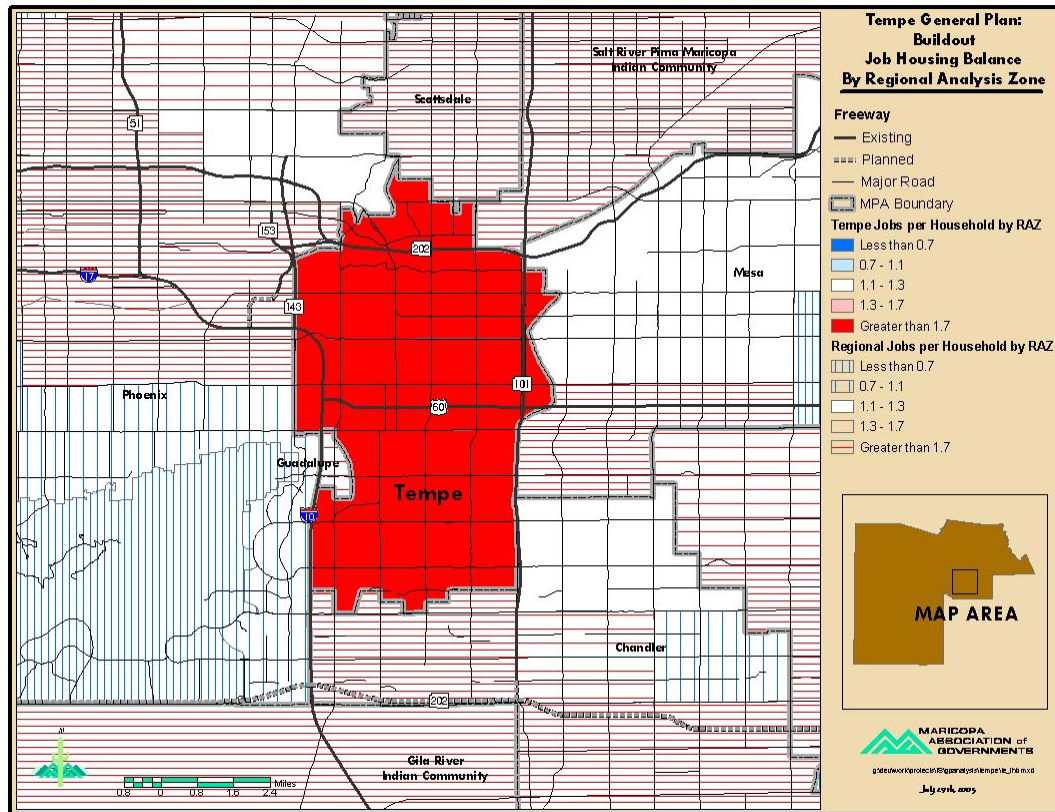


We are including three additional figures in this analysis for information purposes. The first figure shows the City of Tempe build out population concentration, the second shows the City's build out job concentration and the final figure shows the balance of jobs to housing. These figures show the City of Tempe in the context of neighboring communities.









- ***Development that supports existing and planned City and urban centers and cores throughout the region instead of creating new urban and suburban cores and communities outside the urbanized area of the region.***

As stated previously the City of Tempe is, and will continue to be, in a stage of redevelopment. It is clear that the general plan also supports this policy.

- ***Development that is consistent with and cooperates with surrounding land use plans regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.***

We are aware that the City of Tempe is looking at what is going on in neighboring cities. The general plan clearly shows the City in the context of the region.

- ***Development that preserves the quality of regional resources including, but not limited to air, water, and open space.***

Comments on these issues are typically made under the heading of the appropriate elements; however, these elements were well done, and we have no comment on them at this time.

- ***Development that does not overextend or place a financial burden on the infrastructure and/or service provision capacity of surrounding jurisdictions and the region.***

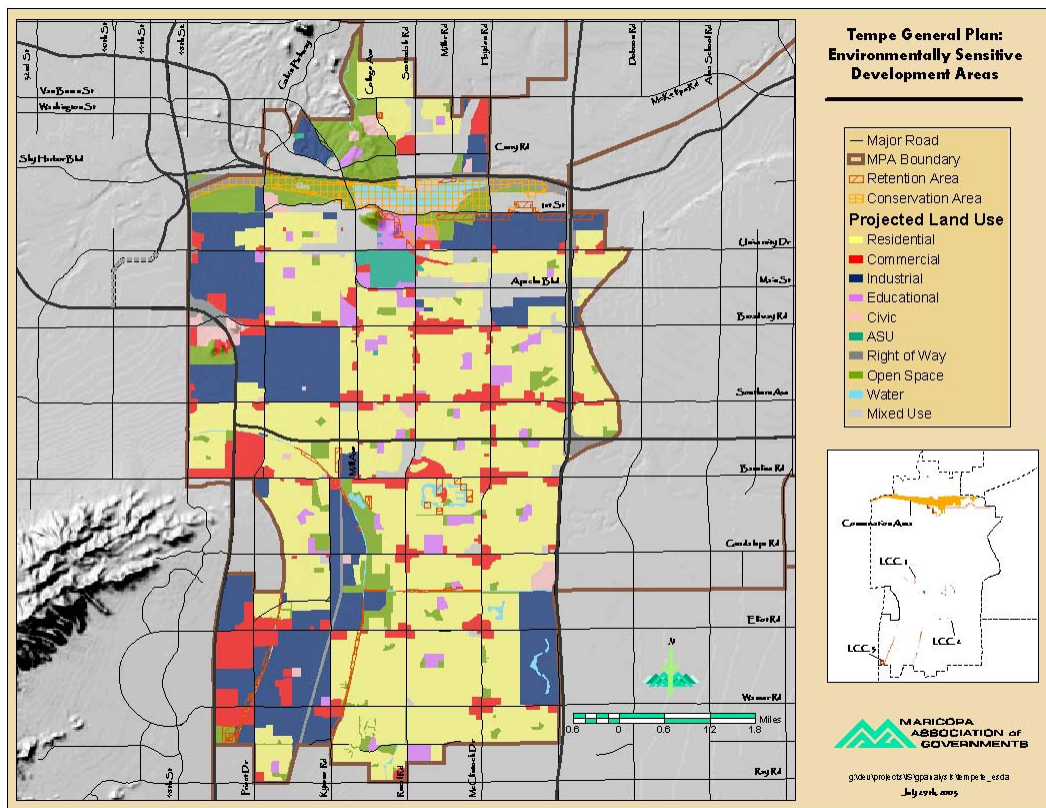
MAG is not in a position to evaluate financial burden on surrounding jurisdictions; however, we encourage the City of Tempe to have discussions with adjacent jurisdictions on common issues relating to infrastructure needs and financial burden.

- ***Development that supports continued use of military installations and local airports***

The Aviation Element refers specifically to the regional context; however, the Regional Aviation System Plan (RASP) plan and the current update of this plan are not mentioned. The RASP plan update is expected to be complete by December 2003.

- ***Development that implements policies in the Desert Spaces Plan.***

The City of Tempe has done a magnificent job with the Rio Salado Project, which shows up as an area to be considered for conservation in the MAG Desert Spaces Plan. We have prepared a map, presented below, that shows the City's proposed land use plan in relation to the Desert Spaces Plan. When reviewing the Environmentally Sensitive Development Areas map, it is important to note that the data being presented at the local scale was originally collected at a regional scale. It is intended as a guide, not a specific map on which to base the acquisition or management of land. Further research would be necessary at the local level, prior to making decisions regarding the specific location for acquisitions or management. It is more important that the concept is implemented than the boundaries match exactly. The canals within the City are other areas within the City that should be considered for environmentally sensitive development as outlined in MAG's Desert Spaces: Environmentally Sensitive Development Areas (ESDA) Policies and Design Guidelines.



Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your general plan. We hope that you will find these general comments useful as you finalize your document and prepare for the approval process.